

IN THE CLAIMS

Cancel claims 1-22, without prejudice.

Add new claims 23-143 as follows:

23. A control apparatus for controlling the state of use of a plurality of

control targets, the apparatus comprising:

upper control terminal means for issuing a first control command instructing reserved use of the control target; and

control target allocation control means for inhibiting upper control terminal means except for the upper control terminal means which issued the control command, of a plurality of upper control terminal means, from using the control target of the reserved use instructed by the first control command, on the basis of the first control command from the upper control terminal means.

24. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 23, wherein even when a second control command instructing occupancy of the control target of the reserved use instructed by the first control command is received from the upper control terminal means except for the upper control terminal means which issued the first control command, the control target allocation control means inhibits the use by the upper control terminal means which issued the second control command.

25. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 24, wherein when the first control command is received from the upper control terminal means, the control target allocation control means registers information including the upper control terminal means which issued the first control command and the control target of the reserved use to a management information database of the control target, and when the second control command is received from the upper

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26. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 23, wherein when the first control command instructing reservation of the same control target is received from the plurality of upper control terminal means, the control target allocation control means inhibits the use by the upper control terminal means except for the upper control terminal means which issued the first control command of the highest priority, on the basis of priority added to the first control command.

27. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 26, wherein the control target allocation control means has a management information database for registering information including the terminal user of the upper control terminal means which issued the first control command, the control target of reserved use and the priority added to the first control command, and inhibits the use by the upper control terminal means except for the upper control terminal means which issued the first control command of the highest priority with reference to the management information database.

28. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 23, wherein the control target allocation control means inhibits the use of the plurality of control targets added to the first control command by the upper control terminal means except for the upper control terminal means which issued the first control command, of the plurality of upper control terminal means,

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on the basis of reserved use of a group to which the plurality of control targets added to the first control command belong.

29. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 28, wherein the control target allocation control means has a management information database for registering information including the user of the upper control terminal means which issued the first control command, the control target name instructed by the first control command and the group name to which the plurality of control targets belong, and

even when a second control command instructing occupancy of the plurality of control targets instructed by the first control command is received from the upper control terminal means except for the upper control terminal means which issued the first control command with reference to the management information database, the control target allocation control means transmits a control command indicating failure of the second control command to the upper control terminal means which issued the second control command and thus inhibits the use by the upper control terminal means except for the upper control terminal means which issued the first control command.

30. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 23, wherein the control target includes each recording medium which is non-linearly accessible to each input/output processing means constituting a video server, and each input channel to which data including a plurality of video and/or audio data inputted from outside or outputted from the video server are inputted and each output channel for outputting the data to be outputted to outside or to be outputted to the video server, the input channel and output channel constituting switching means.

31. A control method for controlling the state of use of a plurality of

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control targets, the method comprising:

a first step of receiving a first control command instructing reserved use of the control target from upper control terminal means; and

a second step of inhibiting upper control terminal means except for the upper control terminal means which issued the control command, of a plurality of upper control terminal means, from using the control target of the reserved use instructed by the first control command, on the basis of the first control command.

32. The control method as claimed in claim 31, wherein at the second step, even when a second control command instructing occupancy of the control target of the reserved use instructed by the first control command is received from the upper control terminal means except for the upper control terminal means which issued the first control command, the use by the upper control terminal means which issued the second control command is inhibited.

33. The control method as claimed in claim 31, wherein at the second step, when the first control command is received from the upper control terminal means, information including the upper control terminal means which issued the first control command and the control target of the reserved use is registered to a management information database of the control target, and when the second control command is received from the upper control command and the control target instructed by the second control command is coincident with the control target of the management information database, a control command indicating failure of the second control command is transmitted to the upper control terminal means which issued the second control command, thus inhibiting the use by the upper control terminal means.

34. The control method as claimed in claim 31, wherein at the second step, when the first control command instructing reservation of the same control target is received

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from the plurality of upper control terminal means, the use by the upper control terminal means except for the upper control terminal means which issued the first control command of the highest priority is inhibited on the basis of priority added to the first control command.

35. The control method as claimed in claim 34, wherein the second step has a management information database for registering information including the terminal user of the upper control terminal means which issued the first control command, the control target of reserved use and the priority added to the first control command, and inhibits the use by the upper control terminal means except for the upper control terminal means which issued the first control command of the highest priority with reference to the management information database.

36. The control method as claimed in claim, 31, wherein at the second step, the use of the plurality of control targets added to the first control command by the upper control terminal means except for the upper control terminal means which issued the first control command, of the plurality of upper control terminal means, is inhibited on the basis of reserved use of a group to which the plurality of control targets added to the first control command belong.

37. The control method as claimed in claim 36, wherein a management information database is provided for registering information including the user of the upper control terminal means which issued the first control command, the control target name instructed by the first control command and the group name to which the plurality of control targets belong, and

even when a second control command instructing occupancy of the plurality of control targets instructed by the first control command is received from the upper control terminal means except for the upper control terminal means which issued the first control

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command with reference to the management information database, a control command indicating failure of the second control command is transmitted to the upper control terminal means which issued the second control command, thus inhibiting the use by the upper control terminal means except for the upper control terminal means which issued the first control command.

38. The control method as claimed in claim 31, wherein the control target includes each recording medium which is non-linearly accessible to each input/output processing means constituting a video server, and each input channel to which data including a plurality of video and/or audio data inputted from outside or outputted from the video server are inputted and each output channel for outputting the data to be outputted to outside or to be outputted to the video server, the input channel and output channel constituting switching means.

39. A control apparatus for controlling the state of use of a plurality of control targets, the apparatus comprising:

upper control terminal means for issuing a first control command instructing permission of occupancy and use of the control target; and

control target allocation control means for inhibiting upper control terminal means except for the upper control terminal means, of a plurality of upper control terminal means, from using the control target instructed by the first control command, on the basis of priority added to the first control command from the upper control terminal means.

40. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 39, wherein when the first control command instructing permission of occupancy and use of the same control target is received from the plurality of upper control terminal means, the control target allocation control means inhibits the occupancy and use of the control target by the upper control terminal means

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except for the upper control terminal means which issued the first control command of the highest priority on the basis of the priority.

41. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 40, wherein the control target allocation control means has an occupancy management information database constituted by the control target for which a notification of permission of occupancy is issued, the upper control terminal means which issued the first control command and the priority added to the first control command, and when the first control command instructing permission of occupancy of the same control target as the control target registered to the occupancy management information database is received from the upper control terminal means except for the upper control terminal means registered to the database, of the plurality of upper control terminal means, the control target allocation control means compares the priority added to the first control command and inhibits the upper control terminal means except for the upper control terminal means which issued the first control command of the highest priority, from using the control target.

42. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 41, wherein the control target allocation control means compares the priority on the basis of the database, and when the priority registered to the database is lower than the priority added to the upper control terminal means which issued the first control command, the control target allocation control means issues a control command indicating cancel of the occupancy and use to the upper control terminal means having the priority registered to the database.

43. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 41, wherein when a second control command instructing permission of occupancy and use of the plurality of control targets is received from the upper control terminal means, the control target allocation control means compares the lowest priority of the priorities registered to the database of the plurality of control

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targets instructed by the second control command, of the plurality of control targets registered to the database, with the priority added to the second control command, and inhibits the upper control terminal means except for the upper control terminal means which issued the control command of the higher priority, from using the control targets.

44. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 39, wherein the control target includes each recording medium which is non-linearly accessible to each input/output processing means constituting a video server, and each input channel to which data including a plurality of video and/or audio data inputted from outside or outputted from the video server are inputted and each output channel for outputting the data to be outputted to outside or to be outputted to the video server, the input channel and output channel constituting switching means.

45. A control apparatus for controlling the state of use of a plurality of control targets, the apparatus comprising:

a plurality of upper control terminal means for issuing a first control command requesting permission of occupancy and use of the control target; and

allocation control means for issuing, to one of the plurality of upper control terminal means, a notification of permission indicating the permission of use with respect to the control target indicated by the first control command, on the basis of the priority given to the first control command from the plurality of upper control terminal means.

46. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 45, wherein when the first control command requesting the permission of use with respect to the same control target is received from the plurality of upper control terminal means, the allocation control means issues the notification of permission to the upper control terminal means which issued the first control command of the highest priority on the basis of the priority.

47. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 46, wherein the allocation

control means includes an occupancy management information database including the control target for which the notification of permission is issued, the upper control terminal means which issued the first control command, and the priority given to the first control command, and when a second control command requesting permission of use with respect to the control target registered to the database is received from the upper control terminal means other than the upper control terminal means registered to the occupancy management information database, the allocation control means compares the priority given to the first control command issued by the upper control terminal means with respect to the control target registered to the database and the priority given to the second control command, and issues the notification of permission to the upper control terminal means which issued the first or second control command of the higher priority.

48. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 47, wherein the allocation

control means compares the priority, and issues a notification of cancel for canceling the permission of occupancy and use to the control terminal means which issued the first control command when the priority given to the first control command is lower than the priority given to the second control command.

49. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 46, wherein when a third

control command requesting permission of occupancy and use with respect to the plurality of control targets is received from the upper control terminal means, the allocation control means compares the lowest priority of the plurality of control targets registered to the database and the priority given to the third control command, and issues the notification of permission to the

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upper control terminal means which issued the third control command when the priority given to the third control command is higher.

50. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 47, wherein the control targets include a video server including a plurality of input/output processing means and a non-linearly accessible recording medium so that one input/output processing means can access the recording medium in an allocated time slot, and a switcher including a plurality of input channels to which a plurality of data including video and/or audio data inputted from outside or outputted from the video server are inputted and a plurality of output channels for outputting the data to be outputted to outside or to the video server.

51. A control method for controlling the state of use of a plurality of control targets, the method comprising:

a first step of receiving a first control command requesting permission of occupancy and use of the control target from a plurality of upper control terminal means; and

a second step of issuing, to one of the plurality of upper control terminal means, a notification of permission indicating the permission of use with respect to the control target indicated by the first control command, on the basis of the priority given to the first control command.

52. The control method as claimed in claim 51, wherein at the second step, when the first control command requesting the permission of use with respect to the same control target is received from the plurality of upper control terminal means, the notification of permission is issued to the upper control terminal means which issued the first control command of the highest priority on the basis of the priority.

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53. The control method as claimed in claim 52, wherein at the second step, an occupancy management information database is provided including the control target for which the notification of permission is issued, the upper control terminal means which issued the first control command, and the priority given to the first control command, and when a second control command requesting permission of use with respect to the control target registered to the database is received from the upper control terminal means other than the upper control terminal means registered to the occupancy management information database, the priority given to the first control command issued by the upper control terminal means with respect to the control target registered to the database and the priority given to the second control command are compared and the notification of permission is issued to the upper control terminal means which issued the first or second control command of the higher priority.

54. The control method as claimed in claim 53, wherein at the second step, the priority is compared, and a notification of cancel for canceling the permission of occupancy and use is issued to the control terminal means which issued the first control command when the priority given to the first control command is lower than the priority given to the second control command.

55. The control method as claimed in claim 53, wherein at the second step, when a third control command requesting permission of occupancy and use with respect to the plurality of control targets is received from the upper control terminal means, the lowest priority of the plurality of control targets registered to the database and the priority given to the third control command are compared, and the notification of permission is issued to the upper control terminal means which issued the third control command when the priority given to the third control command is higher.

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56. The control method as claimed in claim 51, wherein the control targets include a video server including a plurality of input/output processing means and a non-linearly accessible recording medium so that one input/output processing means can access the recording medium in an allocated time slot, and a switcher including a plurality of input channels to which a plurality of data including video and/or audio data inputted from outside or outputted from the video server are inputted and a plurality of output channels for outputting the data to be outputted to outside or to the video server.

57. A control apparatus for controlling the state of use of a plurality of control targets, the apparatus comprising:

a plurality of upper control terminal means for issuing a first control command requesting permission of use of the control target; and

management means for issuing identification information provided for each of the control targets to the one upper control terminal means which issued the first control command, on the basis of the first control command including at least the control target.

58. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 57, wherein the upper control terminal means appends the identification information issued from the management means, and issues a second control command, which is a command for controlling the control target, to the management means.

59. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 58, wherein the first control command further includes the file name of a file including video and/or audio data to be inputted from and/or outputted to the control target, and the management means issues to the control target a third control command for causing the control target to control the file on the basis of the second control command.

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60. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 57, wherein the management means has at least an identification information management database including the control target and the identification information, and identification information provided for another one of the control targets and different from the identification information is registered to an entry of identification information of the database with respect to the control target appended to the first control command, the identification information being issued to the upper control terminal means.

61. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 60, wherein the identification information is further registered to the identification information management database and the file name appended to the first control command is registered thereto.

62. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 60, wherein when the identification information is already registered to the entry of identification information of the database with respect to the control target appended to the first control command, the management means issues error information inhibiting the permission of use to the upper control terminal means which issued the first control command.

63. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 62, wherein when a fourth control command indicating a command for deleting the identification information from the upper control terminal means is received, the management means deletes the identification information with respect to the first control command registered to the database.

64. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 57, wherein the control targets are each input/output processing means of a video server adapted for recording data to and reproducing data from a non-linearly accessible recording medium, and each input section and output section each of switchers to which the data inputted from outside or outputted from each

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input/output processing means of the video server is inputted or from which the data is outputted to outside or inputted to each input/output processing means of the video server.

65. A control method for controlling the state of use of a plurality of control targets, the method comprising:

a first step of receiving a first control command requesting permission of use of the control target, outputted from a plurality of upper control terminal means; and

a second step of issuing identification information provided for each of the control targets to the one upper control terminal means which issued the first control command, on the basis of the first control command including at least the control target.

66. The control method as claimed in claim 65, further comprising a third step of receiving a second control command, which is a command for controlling the control target, issued from the one upper control terminal means and having the identification information appended thereto.

67. The control method as claimed in claim 65, wherein the first control command includes the file name of a file including video and/or audio data to be inputted from and/or outputted to the control target, and at the third step, a third control command for causing the control target to control the file is issued on the basis of the second control command.

68. The control method as claimed in claim 65, wherein at the first step, the identification information other than the identification information provided for another one of the control targets is registered to an entry of control target appended to the first control command, from an identification information management table including at least the control target and the identification information, and the registered identification information is issued to the one upper control terminal means which issued the first control command.

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69. The control method as claimed in claim 68, wherein the identification information is further registered to the identification information management table and the file name appended to the first control command is registered thereto.

70. The control method as claimed in claim 68, wherein at the first step, when the identification information is already registered to the entry of identification information of the control target of the database with respect to the control target appended to the first control command, error information inhibiting the permission of use is issued to the upper control terminal means which issued the first control command.

71. The control method as claimed in claim 70, wherein at the first step, when a fourth control command indicating a command for deleting the identification information from the upper control terminal means is received, the identification information with respect to the first control command registered to the database is deleted.

72. The control method as claimed in claim 65, wherein the control targets are each input/output processing means of a video server adapted for recording data to and reproducing data from a non-linearly accessible recording medium, and each input section and output section each of switchers to which the data inputted from outside or outputted from each input/output processing means of the video server is inputted or from which the data is outputted to outside or outputted to each input/output processing means of the video server.

73. A control apparatus for controlling a plurality of control targets, the apparatus comprising:

a plurality of upper control terminal means for issuing a first control command requesting permission of use of the control target;

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identification information management means for issuing identification

information provided for each of the control targets to the one upper control terminal means which issued the first control command, on the basis of the first control command including at least the control target;

connection information management means for managing connection information of the control target; and

control information processing means for, when a second control command indicating connection of the control target to which the identification information issued by the identification information management means is appended is received from the upper control terminal means, issuing a third control command indicating a connection instruction to the control target indicated by the second control command on the basis of the management information of the connection information management means.

74. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 73, wherein the control target includes a switcher having a plurality of input sections and a plurality of output sections, and the second control command includes first identification information issued by the upper control terminal means with respect to the control target connected to each input section of the switcher and second identification information issued by the upper control terminal means with respect to the output sections of the switcher.

75. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 74, wherein the connection information management means has a connection point table including information related to each input section of the switcher, the control target connected to each input section of the switcher, and information related to each output section of the switcher, and issues the third control command including the information related to the input section and the information

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related to the output section to the control target included in the first control command with reference to the connection point table from the second control command, the switcher having its input sections and output sections controlled for connection on the basis of the information related to the input section and the information related to the output section included in the third control command.

76. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 73, wherein the identification information management means has an identification information management table including at least the control target and the identification information, and identification information provided for another one of the control targets and different from the identification information is registered to an entry of identification information of the management table with respect to the control target appended to the first control command, the identification information being issued to the upper control terminal means.

77. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 76, wherein the identification information is further registered to the identification information management table, and the file name appended to the first control command registered thereto.

78. A control method for controlling a plurality of control targets, the method comprising:

a first step of receiving a first control command requesting permission of use of the control target, outputted from a plurality of upper control terminal means;

a second step of issuing identification information provided for each of the control targets to the one upper control terminal means which issued the first control command, on the basis of the first control command; and

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a third step of, when a second control command indicating connection of the control target to which the identification information is appended is received, issuing a third control command indicating a connection instruction to the control target indicated by the second control command with reference to a connection management information table indicating connection information of the control target.

79. The control method as claimed in claim 78, wherein the control target includes a switcher having a plurality of input sections and a plurality of output sections, and the second control command includes first identification information issued by the upper control terminal means with respect to the control target connected to each input section of the switcher and second identification information issued by the upper control terminal means with respect to the output sections of the switcher.

80. The control method as claimed in claim 79, wherein the connection information management table includes information related to each input section of the switcher, the control target connected to each input section of the switcher, and information related to each output section of the switcher, and when the second control command is received, the third control command including the information related to the input section and the information related to the output section is issued from the control target corresponding to the identification information included in the second control command with reference to the connection information management table, the switcher further including a fourth step of controlling connection of the input sections and output sections of the switcher on the basis of the information related to the input section and the information related to the output section included in the third control command.

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81. The control method as claimed in claim 78, wherein at the second step, identification information provided for another one of the control targets and different from the identification information is registered to the entry of identification information of the management table so as to correspond to the control target appended to the first control command, from an identification information management table including at least the control target and the identification information, and the second control command is issued to the one upper control terminal means.

82. The control method as claimed in claim 81, wherein the identification information is further registered to the identification information management table, and the file name appended to the first control command is registered thereto.

83. A control apparatus for controlling a plurality of control targets, the apparatus comprising:

a plurality of upper control terminal means for issuing a first control command requesting permission of use of the control target;

management means having a control target management table including at least the control target and first identification information corresponding to each of the control targets, for issuing a second control command requesting permission of use of the control target including the first identification information from the management table on the basis of the first control command including the control target; and

control target control means for notifying of a result with respect to the permission of use of the control target on the basis of the second control command;

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the management means setting a use permission flag with respect to the control target included in the management table on the basis of the result from the control target control means.

84. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 83, wherein the management table further includes an entry to which second identification information corresponding to the control target is registered when the control target cannot be uniquely identified by the first identification information alone, and when issuing to the control target control means the second control command with respect to the control target which cannot be uniquely identified by the first identification information alone, the management means issues the second control command including the second identification information as well as the first identification information to the control target control means.

85. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 83, wherein when the control target control means has notified of a result indicating permission of use of the control target with respect to the second control command, the management means sets information indicating permission of use to the use permission flag of the management table and issues stream identification information provided for each of the control targets to the upper control terminal means.

86. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 83, wherein when the stream identification information is received from the management means, the upper control terminal means issues to the management means a control command with respect to the control target using the stream identification information.

87. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 84, wherein the control target includes a video server having a plurality of non-linearly accessible recording media and a

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plurality of input/output processing means for outputting, to the recording medium, data including video and/or audio data accessed and processed in a tune slot allocated to the recording medium or for accessing and reading the data recorded on the recording medium in the tune slot and then processing the data, and

the control target identified by the second identification information includes each input/output processing means and each of the recording media of the video server.

88. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 87, wherein the non-linearly accessible recording medium is a hard disk, and each recording medium identified by the second identification information is a hard disk drive.

89. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 83, wherein the control target includes a switcher having a plurality of input sections and a plurality of output sections for switching the input sections and output sections to output from one output section data inputted from one input section, and sets the use permission flag with reference to the management table without issuing the second control command when the management means has received the first control command requesting the permission of use to the output section of the switcher.

90. A control method for controlling a plurality of control targets, the method comprising:

a first step of receiving a first control command requesting permission of use of the control target from upper control terminal means;

a second step of issuing a second control command requesting permission of use of the control target including first identification information on the basis of the first control command from a control target management table including at least the control target and the first identification information corresponding to each of the control targets;

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a third step of receiving a result of permission of use of the control target with respect to the second control command; and

a fourth step of setting a use permission flag with respect to the control target included in the management table on the basis of the result of the permission of use.

91. The control method as claimed in claim 90, wherein the management table further includes second identification information corresponding to the control target when the control target cannot be uniquely identified by the first identification information alone, and when issuing to the control target control means the second control command with respect to the control target which cannot be uniquely identified by the first identification information alone, the second control command including the second identification information as well as the first identification information is issued.

92. The control method as claimed in claim 90, wherein at the fourth step, when a result indicating permission of use of the control target is notified of, information indicating permission of use with respect to the control target included in the management table is set, the method further comprising a fifth step of issuing stream identification information provided for each of the control targets to the upper control terminal means which issued the first control command with respect to the control target for which the information indicating the permission of use is provided.

93. The control method as claimed in claim 90, further comprising a sixth step of retrieving the control target for which the control command should be issued, with reference to the management table, when the control command having the stream identification information appended thereto is received.

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94. The control method as claimed in claim 90, wherein the control target includes a video server having a plurality of non-linearly accessible recording media and a plurality of input/output processing means for outputting, to the recording medium, data including video and/or audio data accessed and processed in a tune slot allocated to the recording medium or for accessing and reading the data recorded on the recording medium in the time slot and then processing the data, and

the control target identified by the second identification information includes each input/output processing means and each of the recording media of the video server.

95. The control method as claimed in claim 94, wherein the non-linearly accessible recording medium is a hard disk, and each recording medium identified by the second identification information is a hard disk drive.

96. The control method as claimed in claim 90, wherein the control target includes a switcher having a plurality of input sections and a plurality of output sections for switching the input sections and output sections to output from one output section data inputted from one input section, and at the fourth step, the use permission flag with reference to the management table without issuing the second control command at the third step, when the first control command requesting the permission of use to the output section of the switcher is received at the first step.

97. A control apparatus for controlling a plurality of control targets, the apparatus comprising:

a plurality of upper control terminal means for issuing a first control command requesting permission of use of the control target; and

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management means to which the first control command including the file name of a file stored in one of the control targets is inputted, for finding the control targets to which the file is to be outputted from the file name and selecting, from the control targets that are found, the control target other than the control target used by the upper control terminal means.

98. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 97, wherein the management means issues a second control command indicating permission of use to the upper control terminal means which issued the first control command to the selected control target.

99. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 97, wherein when all the control targets found are used, the management means selects the control target having the lowest priority of the control targets having the priority of permission of use of the control target included in the first control command of the upper control terminal means which is lower than the priority included in the first control command, of the control commands that are found.

100. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 99, wherein the management means issues a third control command requesting open use of the control target to the upper control terminal means using the selected control target.

101. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 100, wherein when a fourth control command requesting open use of the control target based on the third control command is inputted, the management means issues a fifth control command indicating permission of use to the upper control terminal means which issued the first control command.

102. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 97, wherein the management means has the first control command inputted thereto, finds a storage device in which the file is stored from the file name included in the first control command, and finds the control target

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connected to the storage device from the storage device that is found, thereby finding the control target to which the file is to be outputted.

103. A control method for controlling a plurality of control targets, the method comprising:

a first step of inputting a first control command requesting permission of use of the control target from a plurality of upper control terminal means;

a second step of finding the control targets to which a file is to be outputted from a file name included in the first control command; and

a third step of selecting, from the control targets that are found at the second step, the control target other than the control target already used by the upper control terminal means.

104. The control method as claimed in claim 103, further comprising a fourth step of issuing a second control command indicating permission of use to the upper control terminal means which issued the first control command to the selected control target.

105. The control method as claimed in claim 103, further comprising a fifth step of, when all the control targets found at the second step are used at the third step, selecting the control target having the lowest priority of the control targets having the priority of permission of use of the control target included in the first control command of the upper control terminal means which is lower than the priority included in the first control command, of the control command that are found.

106. The control method as claimed in claim 105, further comprising a sixth step of issuing a third control command requesting open use of the control target to the upper control terminal means using the control target selected at the fifth step.

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107. The control method as claimed in claim 106, further comprising a seventh step of, when a fourth control command requesting open use of the control target based on the third control command is inputted, issuing a fifth control command indicating permission of use to the upper control terminal means which issued the first control command.

108. The control method as claimed in claim 103, wherein at the second step, a storage device in which the file is stored is found from the file name included in the first control command, and the control target connected to the storage device is found from the storage device, thereby finding the control target to which the file is to be outputted.

109. A control apparatus for controlling a plurality of control targets, the apparatus comprising:

a plurality of upper control terminal means for issuing a first control command requesting permission of use of the control target; and

management means to which the first control command including the file name of a file stored in one of the control targets is inputted, for finding the control targets to which the file is to be outputted from the file name, and selecting the control target for which the upper control terminal means having issued the first control command issued a reserved use command with respect to the control target, of the control targets that are found.

110. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 109, wherein the management means issues a second control command indicating permission of use to the upper control terminal means which issued the first control command to the selected control target.

111. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 109, wherein when the upper control terminal means which issued the first control command has not issued the reservation command to the control target of the control targets that are found, the management means

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selects the control target other than the control target for which another one of the upper control terminal means issued the reservation command, of the control targets that are found.

112. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 111, wherein the management means issues a second control command indicating permission of use to the upper control terminal means which issued the first control command to the selected control target.

113. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 109, wherein the management means finds a storage device in which the file is stored from the file name included in the first control command, and finds the control target connected to the storage device from the storage device, thereby finding the control target to which the file is to be outputted.

114. A control method for controlling a plurality of control targets, the method comprising:

a first step of inputting a first control command requesting permission of use of the control target from a plurality of upper control terminal means;

a second step of finding the control targets to which a file is to be outputted from a file name included in the first control command; and

a third step of selecting the control target for which the upper control terminal means having issued the first control command issued a reserved use command with respect to the control target, of the control targets that are found at the second step.

115. The control method as claimed in claim 114, further comprising a fourth step of issuing a second control command indicating permission of use to the upper control terminal means which issued the first control command to the control target selected at the third step.

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116. The control method as claimed in claim 114, further comprising a fifth step of, when the upper control terminal means which issued the first control command has not issued the reservation command to the control target of the control targets that are found at the second step, selecting the control target other than the control target for which another one of the upper control terminal means issued the reservation command, of the control targets that are found.

117. The control method as claimed in claim 116, further comprising a sixth step of issuing a second control command indicating permission of use to the upper control terminal means which issued the first control command to the control target selected at the fifth step.

118. The control method as claimed in claim 114, wherein at the second step, a storage device in which the file is stored is found from the file name included in the first control command, and the control target connected to the storage device is found from the storage device.

119. A control apparatus for controlling a plurality of control targets, the apparatus comprising:

a plurality of upper control terminal means for issuing a first control command requesting permission of use of the control target; and

management means for, when the first control command including the file name of a file stored in one of the control targets is inputted, finding the control targets to which the file is to be outputted from the file name and selecting the control target other than the control target in an error and warning state, of the control targets that are found.

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120. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 119, wherein the management means issues a second control command indicating permission of use to the upper control terminal means which issued the first control command to the selected control target.

121. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 120, wherein when there is no control target other than the control target in the error and warning state of the control targets that are found, the management means selects the control target in the warning state alone.

122. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 121, wherein the management means issues a second control command indicating permission of use to the upper control terminal means which issued the first control command to the selected control target.

123. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 119, wherein the management means finds a storage device in which the file is stored from the file name included in the first control command, and finds the control target connected to the storage device from the storage device.

124. A control method for controlling a plurality of control targets, the method comprising:

a first step of inputting a first control command requesting permission of use of the control target from a plurality of upper control terminal means;

a second step of finding the control targets to which a file is to be outputted from a file name included in the first control command; and

a third step of selecting the control target other than the control target in an error and warning state, of the control targets that are found at the second step.

125. The control method as claimed in claim 124, further comprising a fourth step of issuing a second control command indicating permission of use to the upper control

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terminal means which issued the first control command to the control target selected at the third step.

126. The control method as claimed in claim 124, further comprising a fifth step of, when at the third step there is no control target other than the control target in the error and warning state of the control targets that are found, selecting the control target in the warning state alone.

127. The control method as claimed in claim 125, further comprising a sixth step of issuing a second control command indicating permission of use to the upper control terminal means which issued the first control command to the control target selected at the fifth step.

128. The control method as claimed in claim 124, wherein at the second step, a storage device in which the file is stored is found from the file name included in the first control command, and the control target connected to the storage device is found from the storage device that is found.

129. A control apparatus for controlling a plurality of control targets, the apparatus comprising:

a plurality of upper control terminal means for issuing a first control command requesting permission of use of the control target; and

management means to which the first control command including the file name of a file stored in one of the control targets is inputted, for forwarding the control targets to which the file is to be outputted from the file name, and selecting the control target which is not in an error state and which is reserved by a reservation command issued by the upper control terminal means having issued the first control command or which is not reserved as a reservation

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command is not issued, and which is in a non-use state or which has low priority of permission of use, from the control targets that are found.

130. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 129, wherein the management means issues a second control command indicating permission of use to the upper control terminal means which issued the first control command to the control targets that are found.

131. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 129, wherein when there are a plurality control targets that are selected, the management means selects the control target in a non-use state from the selected control targets.

132. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 131, wherein the management means issues a second control command indicating permission of use to the upper control terminal means which issued the first control command to the selected control target.

133. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 132, wherein when there are a plurality of control targets that are selected, the management means selects the control target which is not in a warning state from the selected control targets.

134. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 133, wherein the management means issues a second control command indicating permission of use to the upper control terminal means which issued the first control command to the selected control target.

135. The control apparatus as claimed in claim 133, wherein when there are a plurality of control targets that are selected, the management means selects the control target in a reserved state alone to which the first control command is issued.

136. A control method for controlling a plurality of control targets, the method comprising:

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a first step of receiving a first control command requesting permission of use of the control target from a plurality of upper control terminal means;

a second step of inputting the first control command including the file name of a file stored in one of the control targets, and outputting the file from the file naive; and

a third step of selecting the control target which is not in an error state and which is reserved by a reservation command issued by the upper control terminal means having issued the first control command or which is not reserved as a reservation command is not issued, and which is in a non-use state or which has low priority of permission of use, from the control targets that are found at the second step.

137. The control method as claimed in claim 136, further comprising a fourth step of issuing a second control command indicating permission of use to the upper control terminal means which issued the first control command to the control targets that are found.

138. The control method as claimed in claim 136, further comprising a fifth step of, when at the third step there are a plurality control targets that are selected, selecting the control target in a non-use state from the selected control targets.

139. The control method as claimed in claim 138, further comprising a sixth step of issuing a second control command indicating permission of use to the upper control terminal means which issued the first control command to the control target selected at the fifth step.

140. The control method as claimed in claim 138, further comprising a seventh step of, when at the fifth step there are a plurality of control targets that are selected, selecting the control target which is not in a warning state from the selected control targets.